



(Photo by Pfc. William Hatton 7th MPAD)

## Troops move in, insurgents move out

Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division unload various facilities used for Combat Outpost Thrasher, located in the western Baghdad neighborhood of Ghazaliya, March 17. (See story page 4)

## Iraqi, U.S. troops build relations with villagers

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp  
1-1 Cav. Public Affairs

KEM, Iraq - Troops from the 2nd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized) and Soldiers from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment are continuing to do their part in building relationships with each other as well as with villagers living here.

As part of a combined effort, they did just that as they worked together on a foot patrol, passing out fliers and going door to

door meeting the villagers in the area March 17. The fliers explained how the people could protect themselves against the threats of improvised explosive device attacks, what to do if they should stumble across an IED, how to recognize threats so they do not become victims of insurgent motivated violence and who to call for help.

"I prefer to be doing missions like this one where we actually can see first hand the long term benefits," said Pfc. Jeremy Stone, an infantryman with Co. A, 2nd Bn.,

8th Cav. Regt. and a native of Somis, Calif. "A lot of times when we go on routine patrols, it's hard to see exactly how we're making a difference, but meeting the people here and working with the IAs and seeing them do their parts to help end the violence here and protect the people is a great feeling."

Carrollton, Ohio native Sgt. Jerrod Border, a team leader with Co.A whose

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# Foot patrol brings Iraqi and U.S. troops closer

## Relations

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Soldiers often do foot patrols in the area, said his troops are slowly but surely building relations with the IAs and the people in their area of operations and positive things are beginning to happen through their partnership with the IAs.

"Sometimes there are people who, when you talk to them, they're a little afraid to talk to us because they may feel the insurgents are watching and may harm them," said Sgt. Jerrod Border, a team leader for Co. A. "But for the most part, the people want us here and everyday things are getting better. They're starting to feel more secure with the IAs and with us. We're trying to get out here more often, so the people can feel safe in their neighborhoods."

During the patrol, each Co. A Soldier teamed up with an Iraqi Army "battle buddy." Over the course of talking to villagers and handing out the fliers, the Co. A Soldiers observed as the



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp 1-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

**An Iraqi Army soldier makes friends with an Iraqi boy March 17 during a foot patrol near the village of Kem, Iraq. The boy rushed over to show the soldier a fish he had caught.**

Iraqi Army soldiers led the efforts of getting to know the people.

"This is a really sharp group, they really know their stuff and they're really squared away," said Border, whose battle buddy was an IA squad leader.

When time and the situation allowed, there was also some

good natured kidding amongst the IA troops and Co. A Soldiers, which reflected that they have become brothers in arms, said Border.

As Baghdad Security Plan operations continue flushing insurgents from the city, IA troops and Soldiers like those in Co. A will keep working to keep

the enemy from finding safe havens in the outer-lying communities like Kem, said Capt. Scott Hequembourg, commander, Co. A, 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt.

"The way we see it is, as they clear Baghdad of bad guys, they're going to try to go somewhere, so we have to be prepared to clear the area, and help the people here," said Hequembourg. "Some of our biggest goals are to keep routes clear for supplies and helping the Iraqi security forces train up to where they can protect the people and eventually U.S. forces can leave."

"The IAs are getting better at what they do every day," he added "The people in the villages are getting friendlier and most of them are good and just want to have a good life. I believe our Soldiers see that all of the hard work is leading to something positive and that it's not a waste of time-they are going to have a sense of accomplishment of helping not only Iraq, but their own country as well."

## Arabic Phrase of the Day

*ghasil*

**Defined:**  
wash

## Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



Today

High: 77  
Low: 55



Tomorrow

High: 77  
Low: 54



Friday

High: 81  
Low: 57

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## Golden Dragons capture mortar team

**2-10 Mtn. Public Affairs**

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq - A 120mm mortar system and terrorist cell were captured southwest of Sadr Al-Yusufiyah, Iraq, March 19.

Soldiers of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) ran into four terrorists with AK-47s at about 1:30 p.m. local time. The terrorists fled.

The men had seemed to be guarding a home; Soldiers entered and questioned 13 local nationals in the home while other Soldiers of the team pursued the fleeing terrorists.

In the house, the Soldiers discovered two 120mm mortar rounds and three 82mm rounds, as well as a number of hand grenades.

Approximately a half-hour later, the Soldiers found a 120mm mortar tube in a truck parked at a house nearby. In the truck were also found two 120mm rounds, a loaded PKC machine gun with 200 rounds of ammunition, a mortar sighting device, nine 120mm charges, and 30 Russian-made shape charges.

As the terrorists fled, they left many objects in a nearby reed-line, which the Soldiers seized. The objects included four 82mm mortar rounds, two load-bearing vests

full of loaded magazines, two hand grenades, two 82mm mortar charges, a video camera, a black ski mask, a DVD and a bag of tools.

In the second house, the Soldiers discovered five 82mm mortar fuses, two AK-47s, seven full magazines for AK-47s, a new global positioning system unit, a mortar compass, a calculator, a piece of paper with mortar tables on it, two notebooks, a video cassette, an unknown rifle, and a bag of electrical components.

"We've been targeting this mortar cell for awhile," said Maj. Web Wright, a native of Annapolis, Md., and a spokesman for the 2nd "Commando" BCT. "They've been launching attacks throughout our area of operations, aimed at (coalition forces) but in a lot of cases they have been injuring civilians as well, so we've put a lot of priority on capturing them."

"Capturing 120mm mortar system is significant," Wright continued. "When you find the tube it strips away their capability to attack, whereas if you find a cache of rounds, although it takes ammunition from them, that tube can still be used again. This time we captured the tube and the people who are trained to use it. This is a very significant event."

The cell was suspected to have attacked Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd BCT, earlier that day.



(Courtesy photo)

**A terrorist mortar cell's equipment sits near a house where the team was captured near Sadr Al-Yusufiyah, Iraq, Mar. 19.**

## Baghdad in Brief

### Iraqi soldiers capture three terrorists near Al-Taqa

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq - Three terrorists were taken into custody by Iraqi Army soldiers during an operation March 19 near Al-Taqa, Iraq.

Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division detained the three men, who were found on a road that skirts the eastern bank of the Euphrates River, with materials for making improvised explosive devices.

The soldiers detained the men for further questioning.

### Western Baghdad raid lands three detainees

BAGHDAD - Iraqi and coalition forces conducted a raid in the western Baghdad neighborhood of Kadamiyah on March 19. The raid was targeting suspected insurgents implicated in the placement of roadside bombs in the area.

During the raid, elements of the 3rd Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division entered the Abass Mosque. No contraband was found in the mosque and approximately 50 people were held in the area until the search was complete. All 50 from within the mosque were released.

After the search, Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers came under rocket-propelled grenade and small arms attack at approximately 9:00 p.m. from a separate group of roughly 20 armed men in the same area. Coalition forces returned fire killing three insurgents.

Three men from the armed group were detained.

US military aircraft participated in the operation but did not expend any ordnance.

# COP Thrasher up and running

By Pfc. William Hatton  
7th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - Soldiers from the 887th Engineer Support Company, 20th Engineer Battalion, 36th Engineer Brigade, and troops from the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, constructed a new combat outpost in the western Baghdad neighborhood of Ghazaliya, March 17.

By putting a combat outpost here in the neighborhood of Ghazaliya, a decrease in insurgent presence, and making a more stable area is what is hoped for, said Sgt. Maj. Russell Hurley, with 2-12 Cav, 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div.

The combat outpost was built in an area that has seen many attacks over the past few months and is known to be a hot and disputed area, said Hurley, a native of Fort Worth, Texas.

There are many things that went into building COP Thrasher, Hurley said.

Some of the things that need to go into building a combat outpost are building protective concrete walls and guard



**A Soldier from the 887th Engineer Support Co., 20th Eng. Bn., 36th Eng. Bde., unhooks a concrete barrier at COP Thrasher March 17.**

towers throughout the outpost, said 1st Lt. Seth Nieman, with 887th Eng. Support Co., 20th Eng. Batt., 36th Eng. Brigade.

"887th Engineer Support Company's mission out here is to set up the concrete barriers used to protect the outpost," said Nieman, a native of Calvin, N.D.

"Although the goal is to knock out the mission as soon as possible, it can be long

and tedious," Nieman said.

By putting up tall concrete barriers around the outpost the threat of sniper fire is reduced, Nieman, said.

One of the biggest things that needs to be looked in whether a combat outpost will be successful is knowing if the units will be able to defend the area, and to determine what the outcome of the mission in building the outpost, Hurley said.



(U.S. Army photos by Pfc. William Hatton, 7th MPAD)

**Soldiers from the 2nd Bn., 12th Cav. Regt., 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div., and from the 887th ESC, 20th Eng. Bn., 36th Eng. Bde., set up Combat Outpost Thrasher, located in the western Baghdad neighborhood of Ghazaliya, March 17. COP Thrasher was placed in Ghazaliya in efforts to lower insurgent presence in the neighborhood.**



# Husband, wife deployment team

**Spc. Karly Cooper**  
15th SB, Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - More and more Soldiers spend their deployments in Iraq serving along side their spouses.

Sgt. Erick McCormick, the warehouse noncommissioned officer in charge for Headquarters Headquarters Company, 15th Brigade Troops Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade from Ketchikan, Alaska and Specialist Michelle McCormick, a supply specialist also with HHC, 15th BTB, 15th SB, from Houston, Texas, on their second deployment together, but first deployment as a married couple.

Spc. McCormick joined the Army in 2004. Right graduation from high school, she packed her bags and headed to Fort Jackson, S. C.

"My dad is a military police and my sister is a supply specialist in the Army Reserves, so I decided to join," she said.

Her first duty station was Fort Hood, Texas and within a few short months of arriving, she deployed to Camp Taji, Iraq for three months during Operation Iraqi Freedom 04-05.

"I was excited because my dad was in Baghdad and my older sister was in Karbala," she said.

Sgt. McCormick joined the Army in 2002 after taking the first few years out of high school to work as a fisherman on charter boats. He also worked as a bio-medical tech at the Ketchikan Indian clinic,



(Photo by Spc. Karly Cooper, 15th SB, PAO)

**Spc. Michelle McCormick and Sgt. Erick McCormick, both with HHC, 15th BTB, 15th SB, met on their first tour during Operation Iraqi Freedom 04-05 and are serving their second tour together.**

ic, a local reservation clinic.

"After the twin towers were hit in 2001, I decided to join," he said.

With friends in Special Forces and the Rangers, he felt the patriotic pull to serve his country. He completed basic combat training at Fort Jackson, S.C. His first duty station was at Fort Hood, Texas.

"I liked my first deployment, we went out on a lot of convoys so we were gone a lot and that made the days go

by faster," he said.

Arriving on Camp Taji, Iraq in 2004, he met his wife while working in the internet café. She would go in and check her email, giving her a reason to go in everyday to sit and look at him.

"I guess you could say it was love at first sight. I would go into supply for minor things like pens just to see her," he smiled.

It took two weeks to get back to the states after the first deployment. After what

seemed like an eternity for the two, they saw each other again and began dating. They married two months later, in May 2005.

"I love having him here. It makes the deployment less difficult since I have him here with me," Spc. McCormick said.

When asked how he likes having his spouse over here with him, he replied with a chuckle.

"It saves me a bunch of money on phone cards."